State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONN. 06106

Chairman Fonfara, Chairwoman Nardello, Ranking Members Witkos, and Williams and members of the Energy & Technology Committee. Thank you for raising and holding this public hearing on House Bill 5212, *AAC Fuel Cells*. In these tough economic times, one of the things our country and our state should be investing in is new technologies that have the ability to reduce our reliance on foreign energy sources, reduce the amount of carbon dioxide we are emitting in the state, and most importantly, foster growth in an industry that has a strong foot-hold in our state.

The bill, as submitted, would require the Department of Transportation to develop a fuel cell program that would make them contract with a Connecticut business to produce fuel cell transit buses. It would provide for bonding over the next four years to begin transforming our state fleet of buses from conventional diesel buses to fuel cell buses. The version of this legislation that was proposed last session would have allowed $50 million in bonding per year, but with the economic downturn we are experiencing, I can understand if that amount is changed this year.

Our state currently operates 237 transit buses through CT-Transit and all but one (The Hartford Fuel Cell Bus) have diesel engines. These buses each emit up to 150,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. If we were to begin purchasing fuel cell buses that run on hydrogen to replace our aging transit buses we would see a total elimination of those emissions, since fuel cell engines do not produce any carbon dioxide emissions. This will help our state meet the strict climate change goals we have set with regard to carbon dioxide reduction.

The replacement of the dirty diesel buses with clean, fuel cell buses will also be beneficial to our state's economy. Nearly 20% of the world's fuel cell work force is in the state of Connecticut. By providing a large market for their product, we would be able to assist them reduce the price for other customers by increasing their economies of scale. A commitment from the state to purchase a pre-set number of vehicles for each of the next four years would allow them to reduce the cost by nearly half. This would provide these companies with the security of a base number of units to create each year and hopefully the cost reduction would be the encouragement other states or municipalities would need to transition their mass transit buses from diesel to fuel cell buses as well. This would allow the fuel cell industry to grow and would also have the positive impact on the smaller businesses in our state that provides the industry with the components to their fuel cells.